



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

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DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON, VICE CHAIR

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **August 4, 2008**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Patricia Curry	Sandra Rudnick
Susan Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Martha Trevino Powell
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Tina Pedersen	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Carol O. Biondi	Rev. Cecil Murray
Ann Franzen	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sorkin, Chair.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions of the audience were made.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the August 4, 2008 meeting was unanimously approved with the following change: move item IX (Education Presentation) after item III (Approval of the Agenda) due to a scheduling conflict with Chief Taylor.

IX. PRESENTATION – EDUCATION

Probation: Chief Robert Taylor reported on the Committee created by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to review issues and provide recommendations on Comprehensive Education Reform in Our Juvenile Halls and Camps. Chief Taylor provided the Commission with a PowerPoint and written report detailing the efforts of the Educational Reform Initiative. Their vision includes comprehensive assessments/case plans, multiple educational pathways, and commitment to literacy, etc. Some key issues/recommendations being addressed by the Committee include Educational Governance/Responsibilities (defining responsibility and accountability for services between Probation and LACOE, and defining responsibilities of parents, caregivers, Juvenile Court, Probation, and educational service providers), Assessments and Case Plans, Instructional Programs and Alternative Educational Models, Special Education, After-School/Weekend Programming, Educational Resources (facilities and classroom issues, and staffing and funding issues), as well as Quality Assurance. The Probation Department hopes to hire a Director of School Services to act as liaison with LACOE and other educational providers to ensure they provide quality educational services to the children. They also are discussing piloting a medical hub at Central Juvenile Hall to address health and mental health issues. The Committee plans to present their report and recommendations to the BOS on August 19, 2008.

Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE): Ron Randolph discussed the need for LACOE and the Probation Department to coordinate efforts on assessments. Two of the goals of the program are: to provide comprehensive educational, sociological, psychological, criminogenic, and multidisciplinary assessments; and to diagnose the deficiencies in literacy or special education needs. Commissioner Curry questioned who would have the responsibility to make sure these multidisciplinary assessment plans get to the schools and make sure they are implemented. Mr. Randolph indicated that the multidisciplinary assessment plans will follow the child either to the camps or back to the community through a collaborative approach with Probation and LACOE. LACOE will have the responsibility for retrieving educational information from the schools when the child enters the halls, and there will be an electronic data transmission and retrieval program to assist in sharing information and hopefully following the child back into the community. Commissioner Rudnick asked for clarifying who would supervise the youth once they leave the halls or camps and what support is available in the community for even low risk youth. Chief Taylor stated that the Probation Officer will follow the child into the community and ensure that the child stays in school as a condition of probation. Jennifer Hottenroth stated that the goal of the education reform is to increase the amount of classroom education and supplemental services received by the child while in the halls and camps and connect them with services in the community so when they leave they have the tools to get engaged in schools and be successful in school and in the community. Mr. Randolph stated that the Probation Department is shifting from incarceration to rehabilitation and LACOE is collaborating with them to educate for literacy and Probation is rehabilitating/preparing them to return to the community.

Commissioner Williams expressed concern over the assumption of using GED as an automatic catch all for youth and cautioned to use GED in only a minimal way.

DCFS: Jennifer Hottenroth gave an overview of DCFS' efforts to change the cultural awareness of early education and recruit children into preschool/early education/child care programs. They identified how many 3-4 year olds are currently in outside child care and how many are in educational programs. With LACOE and Headstart, they have provided literature and information on openings in facilities to DCFS child care providers and joined forces to reach out to relatives and child care providers to enroll more children in these free child care programs. The Commission pointed out that Los Angeles Universal Pre-School (LAUP) is a valuable and free resource for 4 year olds. In response to Commissioner Williams' question regarding Department staffing for education, the Department confirmed a minimal number of staff assigned to education.

Education Coordinating Council: Carrie Miller gave an overview of their efforts in gathering educational data for Foster Care, Probation, and DPSS youth. They have encountered some problems gathering data on graduation rates for foster youth, and the overall educational data. Education data will soon be included in TILP reports and will become available. Foster and Probation youth are currently passing the Casey exam at a 60% rate, which could translate to two-thirds graduating. There have been increases in English language arts and Math at proficient or advanced levels in DCFS and Probation youth in the last two to three years. Suspensions have decreased by almost half in two years increasing Probation Officers on campus. They are also exploring a pilot on electronic data sharing with DCFS, Pomona and Montebello Unified School Districts on all DCFS and Probation youth.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes for the July 21, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Sorkin reported that the Mental Health Commission received a National Association of Counties (NACo) Award and acknowledged the Commission for Children and Family Services for being very instrumental in the Mission Possible and the Art Smart Program. Ilene Raben, of the Mental Health Commission, is requesting the support of the Commission in future arts programs. Approval for Commission support will be addressed in the future.

VI. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORT

Ad Hoc Committee: Committee Chair, Commissioner Curry presented on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee, the report that was created as a result of the Committee's evaluation of Dr. Sanders' report. The report was unanimously approved for submission to the Board of Supervisors with amendments/additions.

Relative Caregiver Committee: Committee Chair, Commissioner Williams reported on the concerns/issues of relative caregivers and especially the challenges regarding home inspections, the Adoption and Safe Family Act (ASFA) and the Kinship Program's support centers. She emphasized that contracted agencies are not going to be used to deliver KEPS support center services. She also mentioned that the Relative Caregiver Committee will conduct a roundtable discussion in the Fall and reiterated the relative caregivers' ability to express concerns and recommendations, although the independent groups are small and not united. She expressed a need for a unified voice for Relative Caregivers and also asked for Commission volunteers for the Relative Caregiver Committee. She added that income received for relative caregivers no longer counts for Section 8 qualifying. The Commission stated that Respite Care Centers are not being used to the fullest capacity.

Prevention Workgroup: Commissioner Rudnick and Angela Carter gave a brief summary on the Prevention Workgroup they attended at Magnolia Place. There was a library, health clinic, employment services, and DCFS and counsel staff are there. Each SPA has now implemented the Prevention Initiative with schools, community, business, and county government collaborating. Focus is on economic development and family economic success and streamlining access to services, support, and resources. A list of collaborative members will be provided to the Commission.

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA): Continued to the next Commission Meeting due to time constraints.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT - DCFS

Ted Myers, in Trish Ploehn's absence, gave a brief update on DCFS. Trish is in Seattle giving a presentation for a Policy Committee on "How to Safely Reduce the Number of Children in Foster Care" using Los Angeles County as a model. There are currently are six states interested in signing up to use this model. DCFS is receiving two NACo Awards, one in Adoptions and the other with Dr. Sophy in Medical. He further informed the Commission that last week testimony was given in Sacramento on Point of Engagement (POE); and this week six leaders and practitioners from Los Angeles County will testify in Los Angeles at the invitation of Speaker Bass at the Assembly Select committee on Foster Care on various DCFS programs and initiatives.

VIII. PRESENTATION - KINSHIP EDUCATION PREPARATION AND SUPPORT (KEPS)

DCFS: Michael Gray gave an overview/update of the KEPS program and the challenges faced by the program. He discussed the transition from a classroom delivery model to a support group approach and using previous trainers and facilitators of the KEPS curriculum as Kinship volunteers to integrate the material into support groups. Facilitation training classes are targeted to be reestablished in mid-August. After transcribing and evaluating the focus group data, they will reestablish the delivery of

KEPS using the new approach. Commissioner Savelle asked if it was known how many siblings are caring for siblings. Michael Gray stated that he is attending a meeting tomorrow with Juvenile Court Services and DCFS Bureau of Information System BIS to try to figure out how to identify this in order to determine the support services needed. DCFS will report back regarding the data finding.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. LaDoris McClaney gave thanks to all who sent condolences in the death of her father.

XI. MEETING ADJOURNED